

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application, as presently amended, is respectfully requested.

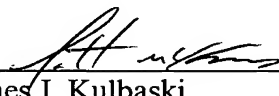
This application is a divisional of application Serial No. 10/669,525, filed on September 25, 2003, which is a divisional of Application Serial No. 09/939,582 (now U.S. Patent No. 6,654,543), filed on August 28, 2001, which is a divisional of Application Serial No. 09/643,985 (now U.S. Patent No. 6,549,721), filed on August 23, 2000, which is a continuation of application No. PCT/JP99/00795 (not published in English), filed on February 23, 1999, the contents of each of which are incorporated herein by reference.

New Claims 14-17 are currently pending. Claims 1-13 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and new Claims 14-17 are added, by the present amendment. Applicants respectfully submit that support for new Claims 14-17 is self-evident from the disclosure as originally filed, including Figures 30-33 and the originally-filed claims. The specification has been amended to include a cross reference to related applications. No new subject matter is introduced by the foregoing amendment.

Accordingly, examination of the present application on the merits is believed to be in order. An early and favorable action on the merits is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



James J. Kulbaski
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 34,648

Scott A. McKeown
Registration No. 42,866

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413-2220
(OSMMN 08/03)

JJK/SAM/CHY:pch
I:\atty\Chy\249741_prel am 16MAR04.doc